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Promotion and protection of the rights of children

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Note by the Secretary-General

1. The Committee on the Rights of the Child, held during 2000 and 2001, two general discussion days on the theme of violence against children. On 12 October 2001, the Committee adopted the report on its twenty-eighth session, which contained a set of recommendations regarding the second of the two discussion days.

2. In accordance with the provisions of article 45 (c) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child,[1] the Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended, inter alia, that the Secretary-General be requested, through the General Assembly, to conduct an in-depth international study on violence against children. The letter sent by the Chairperson of the Committee on the Rights of the Child to the Secretary-General is contained in the annex to the present note.

[1] Resolution 44/25, annex.

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Annex

Letter dated 12 October 2001 from the Chairperson of the Committee on the Rights of the Child addressed to the Secretary-General

On behalf of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, I would like to congratulate you for the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to you and to the United Nations.

In connection with the examination by the General Assembly and its Third Committee of agenda item 115, entitled "Promotion and protection of the rights of children", I have the honour to refer to the holding by the Committee on the Rights of the Child of a general discussion on Friday, 28 September 2001, on the issue of "Violence against children within the family and in schools". The report on that discussion was adopted by the Committee at its 749th meeting, held today in Geneva, as part of the report on its twenty-eighth session.

In its resolution 55/79 of 4 December 2000, the General Assembly "[t]akes note of the general discussion on State violence against children held by the Committee on the Rights of the Child on 22 September 2000, as well as its recommendation to undertake a comprehensive study on the issue of violence against children, exploring its different forms and identifying its causes, its extent and its impact on children, and welcomes the forthcoming general discussion on violence suffered by children in schools and within the family to be held in September 2001" (sect. II, para. 24).

In its resolution 2001/75 of 25 April 2001, the Commission on Human Rights "[n]otes with appreciation the initiative of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on State violence against children, welcomes the upcoming general discussion in September 2001 on the theme of violence suffered by children in schools and within the family, and welcomes the recommendation by the Committee on the Rights of the Child that the Secretary-General should be requested, through the General Assembly, to conduct an in-depth study on the issue of violence against children, inter alia, the different types of violent treatment of which children are victims, to identify their causes, the extent of such violence and its impact on children, and to put forward recommendations for action, including effective remedies and preventive and rehabilitation measures" (para. 17).

Recommendation 7, contained in part two of chapter V of the unedited report on its twenty-eighth session, adopted by the Committee on the Rights of the Child at its 749th meeting, held at Geneva on 12 October 2001, states:

> "(7) In accordance with the provisions of article 45 (c) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Committee recommends that the Secretary-General be requested, through the General Assembly, to conduct an in-depth international study on violence against children. The study should be as thorough and influential as the report of the expert of the Secretary-General, Mrs. Graça Machel, on the impact of armed conflict on children (see A/51/306). Such a study should:
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> "(a) Be guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other relevant international standards and take full account of the recommendations

adopted by the Committee on its days of general discussion, held in 2000 and 2001;

"(b) Document the different types of violence of which children are victims, the prevalence of such violence and its impact on children, adults and societies. Areas of study should include violence within the family and home, in schools and care or residential institutions both State and private, in work situations and in the streets, in detention facilities and prisons, violence by police and the use of capital and physical punishment. Violence should include all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, including sexual abuse, bullying in schools and corporal punishment. Attention should be paid to the impact of discrimination (including, inter alia, discrimination based on gender, race, economic status etc.) on the patterns of violence and vulnerability experienced by children;

"(c) Seek to identify the causes of and contributing factors to violence against children, including factors — such as the role of legislation, public education and training of professionals — that contribute to or obstruct prevention, protection and recovery, and explore the links between different provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international human rights treaties in relation to violence against children;

"(d) Draw primarily on existing research and documentation, including reports to and of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, special rapporteurs and other United Nations and United Nations-related bodies, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, The United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the United Nations Population Fund and the World Health Organization, and studies conducted by academics, research institutions and non-governmental organizations. The study should collect information on different human rights mechanisms and United Nations bodies and agencies and the extent to which the problem of violence against children is addressed in those activities from a human rights perspective;

"(e) Be conducted in collaboration with all United Nations agencies and bodies, and particularly the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations human rights mechanisms, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Health Organization, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, as well as with relevant non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and international professional organizations, and involve children themselves.

"On this basis, and taking into account information on the effectiveness of existing approaches, the study should lead to the development of strategies aimed at effectively preventing and combating all forms of violence against children, outlining steps to be taken at the international level and by States to provide effective prevention, protection, intervention, treatment, recovery and reintegration."

The Committee would be grateful if you could arrange to have the text of the present letter circulated as a document of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, under item 115 of its agenda.

(*Signed*) Jakob Egbert **Doek**
Chairperson
Committee on the Rights of the Child